

# REFLECTIONS

ON THE

## PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

In a late

# COMEDY

CALL'D

## *The Provok'd Husband.*

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By a private GENTLEMAN.

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*Dedicated to his Mistress.*

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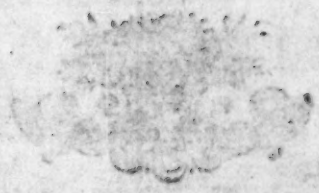
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The gift of  
F. G. Thomson





T O  
C H L O E.

*I*F, Beauteous Chloe, thou wilt deign to find  
In these loose Hints my inmost turn of Mind;  
If sifted from the Dross, the Ore you'll view,  
You'll know my Judgment centers all in you.  
When the good Husband rises in each Line,  
Vainly I fancy lovely Chloe mine;  
Think what Indulgence to her Merit's due,  
Then pay the imagin'd Tribute all to you.  
When the usurping Tyrant stands confess'd,  
With Rage I see my Chloe thus oppress'd;  
Of all the Sex the Champion I prepare,  
Scarce knowing in myself I only arm for her;

But you, triumphant Maid, deride my Toil,  
With Judgment every threatening Mischief foil;  
Mature in Prudence, form'd a Lady Grace,  
With Townly's sprightly Wit, and beauteous  
blossoming Face;  
Wou'd partial Fate your Love on me bestow,  
Practice shou'd joyn what's Speculation now;  
Pattern of Wives my Chloe'd stand confess'd,  
Of happy Husbands I be term'd the best,  
At least my Will shou'd at that Title aim,  
Well pleas'd that Character shou'd bound my Fame.



REFLEC.





# REFLECTIONS

ON THE

## Principal Characters, &c.

**T**HE following Lines are only intended to rouse up a more critical Pen promiscuously to point out the Beauties and Imperfections of a late Entertainment, which has so long amus'd the Town upon a more reasonable turn than their Diversions have for some time taken ; it will easily be understood by this, that I mean the PROVOK'D HUSBAND. And tho' that Comedy has been so long the Topick of all polite Conversation, that there is scarce any thing new to be said upon it, yet the summing up and digesting all the Arguments for and against it, both in the original Scetch, and as it is form'd into an entire Play by Mr. *Cibber*, may possibly not be unuseful, at least to those

those People (as there are some such prodigies even in this understanding Age) who think the Business of Conversation is only to pass off so much Time, and that the growing wiser, or better, was not so much intended from reasonable Arguments, as the growing more insensibly older; for which Reason many very intelligent People never once reflect upon what has past in the most improving Company when once they have left it, and 'tis therefore that Books are so necessary to put them often in mind how they ought to think and act: For Books are but the Effigies of real Sentiments, which we peruse as we do the Pictures of those we love, to keep us in a more constant Contemplation of the valuable Originals. As Action is joyn'd to just Reflections in Plays, I take them to be more improving than any other Kind of Writing, and *vice versa* the most destructive when the Moral is ill drawn, or put upon a fallacious Foundation; 'tis therefore very well worth while strictly to consider every Performance of that Nature which comes out, and that not the mechanical Part only, to which most of our Criticks confine themselves, but  
thoroughly

thoroughly to examine the Usefulness of the Moral, the Justness of the Sentiment, the Politeness of the Style, &c. which in my humble Opinion would be much more to the Purpose than what I before call'd the mechanical Part, such as the Unity of Time and Place, and all those precise Rules, to which a Poet (by the Help of a good Memory) may perfectly attain, without one Grain of Judgment in himself, or Improvement to his Hearers. I would not be understood by this to explode Correctness in any Undertaking; far from it: Symmetry is a Beauty that ought never to be neglected, but at an Entertainment I should be rather apt to enquire whether the Meat was good, and well dress'd, than whether the Dishes were plac'd in the exactest Order, and if I found it so, could forgive the roast taking place of the boil'd, tho' for my Eye-sight's sake should wish the Cook had been a little more circumspect in the OEconomy of his Table. I have often thought it a great Pity that there is not some judicious Person appointed to weigh and examine every Performance that passes the Observation of the Multitude, and point out to them what deserves

serves their Applause, what their Discouragement, what is worthy their Imitation, what their Contempt; for there are many Genius's, and that not among the vulgar only, who are very capable of taking, nay and improving upon a Hint, tho' they could never give one. And indeed this improving Faculty is so very peculiar to the *English* in general, that they have very often brought to Perfection the Begettings of other Nations, which under their own Parents would have prov'd abortive. This is no where more strongly shewn than in the Play in Question; Mr. *Cibber* has no doubt wrought it into a very good Comedy, but 'tis plain by his printing Sir *John Vanbrugh's* part of it, that he is not ashamed to acknowledge that 'twas upon that Gentleman's Shoulders he mounted to so great a Height of Applause: I can't but believe too that he has Generosity enough whenever Occasion shall serve, to avow his Obligation to the Author of a late Play called the *Masquerade*, for many Hints that have help'd to compleat his Performance; it must be allow'd he has done Justice to them both, any impartial Reader

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will



will be oblig'd to own that he has hit the Sense of Sir *John Vanbrugh*, or his own would not piece so well with it; and had he not judg'd advantageously of Mr. *Johnson's* he would not have so closely follow'd it. 'Tis true the Town, when that Gentleman wrote, was not in so good a Humour to receive a Thing of that turn as it is at present, which is plain from the different Reception it met, that Author having (I think) but one or two Benefits at most: This, I say, I attribute to the different turn of Humour the Town was then in, for I would not willingly believe a *British* Audience capable of following a Name only; or that a Favourite Poet, or a consummate Actor should be sufficient to draw Multitudes of them together, and for a length of Time, without the Representation were in itself worthy their Approbation; and therefore I will take it for granted, that whether Sir *John Vanbrugh*, Mr. *Johnson*, Mr. *Cibber*, or *Tom Thumb's* Name appear'd at the Head of any Theatrical Piece, it would (if in itself meritorious) meet with equal Success; but as we all experience, that we are not at all times in a Humour to relish the

same thing, be it ever so excellent, so 'tis with the Publick: Besides, as there are epidemical Vices as well as Diseases in all Nations, and that particular ones rage with more Vehemence in some Seasons than others, whatever is most *a propos* towards exposing the reigning one, will undoubtedly be the best receiv'd. I don't care to believe the Ladies are now fallen into a more irregular way of Living than when Mr. *Johnson* wrote, and that therefore the lashing those mischevious Excursions are by the disregarded Husbands better receiv'd; and yet I can't possibly assign any other Reason except that Partiality, which (as I before said) is unworthy of an *English* Audience, and what an *Englishman* would rather disbelieve his Senses than credit. The Plot of the *Masquerade* is form'd upon the same Plan as that of the *Provok'd Husband*, namely the Reformation of an abandon'd Wife, that is abandon'd to every Vice, except that only which Nature might bring some Plea for. It is plain Mr. *Cibber* approved Mr. *Johnson's* finished Scheme better than Sir *John's* design'd one, since he has left the latter to follow the former; the one

Method

Method would have answer'd to our Judgments, the other soothes our good Nature; which ought to have been gratified is part of our present Enquiry. There is no doubt of it but Marriage (how witty soever the Wags may be upon it in all Seasons, and even the Men of Sense in their looser Moments) is an Institution the most serious in itself, and of the greatest Consequence to a Commonwealth of any in it. If we impartially examine our Hearts we shall find that Women, of some Degree or other, have an Influence over all our Actions, even those that seem most distant from their Natures: And indeed this is so known and confess'd a Truth, that 'tis needless to expatiate upon it; but what we are faulty in is, the not reflecting that their Influence goes much farther than us and themselves. How sad an Effect the Vice of Gaming in a Lady has upon the Peace, Honour, and Fortune of a Husband, and how destructive such a dangerous Amusement is to a whole Family, is the Business of the abovenam'd Authors to set forth; and which of them has done it most effectually is the Town's Business to examine. To begin then with

the *Provok'd Husband*; the Play opens with a Satyr upon the Hero, proceeding from his own Mouth, in the following Interrogatory, *Why did I marry?* Then he goes on to another without giving the least Answer to that, *Was it not evident, my plain rational Scheme of Life was impracticable with a Woman of so different a way of thinking, &c.* I call this a Satyr, since, to use our fine Gentleman's own Word, it was *evident* he was flinging himself into a way of Life that he could not be happy in; whether he was not guilty of an Injustice both to himself and the Lady in engaging with her, when he foresaw their Reverse of Tempers would make them both miserable, I'll leave every impartial Thinker to examine: And I own this palpable Error in his past Conduct, acknowledged from his own Mouth in the Introduction of the Play, prepar'd me, and (I believe) a great many more of the Audience, to observe the Lady's Behaviour with less Abhorrence, and his Misfortune with less Pity than we should otherwise have done. When a thinking Man or Woman engages in so important an Affair as Matrimony, the first thing



thing to be consider'd in it should (I think) be a Similitude of Tempers; without this Cement they will be perpetually falling several ways; and tho' Condescensions from either the one side or other may sometimes reunite them, yet in the main their several attractive Passions will draw them back again. Had Lord *Townly* married a Woman whose Behaviour promised a Lady *Grace*, and then found her degenerate into the Follies and Vices which he so emphatically laments, which it must be allowed has been the Case of some Men, his Merits and her Faults would have appeared in a much stronger Light: Indeed he in two or three Places condemns himself upon that Head, but yet in the last Act he inveighs against the Legislature for not providing a Separation in the Case of such different Humours; and indeed our Laws may be charged with Deficiency in that Point, but yet surely where it can be made appear that People voluntarily fling themselves into an Evil, they have very little Title to the Relief of the Law in any Point. The Number of bad Wives and bad Husbands (if the Ladies will forgive my saying so) are I think in  
*England*

*England* pretty equal; but this I must add, that the Husbands have most generally themselves to thank for their Share of the Unhappiness, while that of the Wives is often unavoidably imposed upon 'em. A Man has Liberty to rove at large, he may converse with and consider almost the whole Sex, and more particularly the polite Freedom of this Age indulges him in an Opportunity of inspecting into a Woman's Humour and Disposition thoroughly before he declares himself a Lover; but a Woman is not upon the same Terms, 'tis not one in a Million that has a Power of disposing of herself; and where she has, she can only make a Choice out of those few that address her; and indeed most Womens Judgments are for that Reason vastly confined; for Marriage is now so exploded a thing, that few, if any, Men enter premeditatedly into it. When a young Man of any Sense or Spirit enters into Life, the first Resolution he makes is against Matrimony; he scorns to be the Slave of a Woman, he may squander his Estate, destroy his Constitution, plot and contrive, rack his Brains as severely, and spend as much Time as would enable him

him to be a first Minister, and all in the Cause of Woman: But provided he don't marry, he still esteems himself free, tho' there is not an Action of his Life but is influenced by some one or other of the Sex: This being the Case, it is no Wonder our Men of Fashion, when they do enter into that State, are so wretched in it, for they are seldom guided to a Choice but through Caprice or Interest: Nay, how many Men in this Age, and that of Judgment too in other Points, have been drawn in, out of an Abhorrence to a married State with a Woman of Virtue and Condition, to fall into that way of Life with a common Prostitute? This Truth many a Family severely feels, and it is a melancholy Reflection, that, even in our most solemn Processions, there have Women walked as Peereesses, who have in their Lives walked *Fleetstreet* in another Capacity. But as Men who injure themselves, their Families, and even the Honour of the Nobility in general, in such a gross Manner, are but few, and not represented in the Subject before us, I shall pass them over (as the World would, were it just to itself) with the slightest Notice,  
and

and proceed in the Consideration of Lord *Townly's* Character; and under his, his Lady's, and the rest that allude to them, will be included; then I shall slightly compare those Characters with them of the same Nature in Mr. *Johnson's Masquerade*, and submit it to the Judgment of the World, whose Scheme is most consonant to Reason, good Manners, and that Reformation which the several Representations are designed to work upon the Ladies.

In Mr. *Cibber's* Piece, as I before observed, Lord *Townly* in the first Scene, at once gives up his Judgment in the Choice of a Wife, by acknowledging she was not in any Degree the Sort of Woman that suited him; so that what we have to remark, is his Conduct towards her, and the Method he takes to give her the Turn of Mind he desires she should have. If the Business of the Drama (as undoubtedly it is) be to expose Folly, and punish it according to its Degree; this certainly is the Masterpiece of Mr. *Cibber's* Performance. Sir *John* leaves us in the dark as to  
that



that part, but after such a Confession as Mr. *Gibben* puts into the Heroe's Mouth, we can neither wonder at his Fate, nor, bating the Action of Mr. *Wilks*, have any Pity for his Misfortune, but must allow his Usage to be no more than is answerable to the Strictness of Poetical Justice. Mr. *Johnson* introduces his Heroe, Mr. *Ombre*, with a Soliloquy much to the same Purpose, only he prepares us for something more of Compassion towards him, by owning that his Judgment (tho' it appears throughout a very good one) did at the time of his ingaging with his Wife mislead him; and that it did not appear *evident* to him, that his Scheme of Life was impracticable. Thus we see them both entered, but with this Difference, the one with a Hope of Happiness, the other with none; the Characters are both in Life, therefore both good in their way. Now to go on to their several ways of Management, towards extricating themselves out of the Perplexities they are involved in. After Lord *Townly* has married, and linked himself for Life to this gay, giddy, unthinking Creature, what does he do towards

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making

making a Reform? Why, she indeed in the last Act confesses, that he indulged her in her Follies, and so plunged her the deeper into them, that is, in the Height of her Penitence, the Poet makes her own herself the most disingenuous Woman, as well as him a Man of the most Lenity alive; but I can't say the latter appears throughout the Drama; on the contrary they never meet but he is remonstrating to her in the severest Manner: And indeed, the Rule of Life he lays down in every Page is much more consonant to a grave stayed Woman, that is past the Gayeties and Follies of Life, than a young giddy Creature flushed with Youth and Prosperity, that is just entering into it. And she herself, before she comes to her State of Penitence, contradicts what she then offers in Regard to his Lenity, where she says, *If my wise Lord could but hold his Tongue for a Week, 'tis odds but I should hate the Town in a Fortnight; but I will not be driven out of it, that's positive.* And indeed this Humour appears to be with my Lord as great a Crime as her Gaming, which he also levels with her sitting up an Hour or two later than he chooses.

ses. If I may be allowed to find a Fault in what the Town has so unanimously approved, I must say this is a very great one; that levelling little Faults, and which are only made so by a particular Humour, with the greatest Crimes (as I take Gaming to be) that a Woman can be guilty of, will be by far more apt in her Opinion to sink the Crime into the Indifference of the Trifle, than raise the Trifle to the Bulk of the Crime. In *England*, where Women are possess'd of some Reason, and where Custom allows them the Privilege of using it to the utmost, they insist in the general upon having that applied to, and when that is not convinced, Force is of little Use. As to Duty and Obedience, which my Lord *Townly* dwells so much upon, it is to me very absurd, that the Men of Pleasure, who take so much Pains to laugh the Women in general out of any the least Notion of it, should the most strenuously contend for it in a Wife of their own; but yet that is generally the Case, vainly imagining that while they are endeavouring to corrupt the Principles of the Women, in order to fit them for their looser Pleasures, the Infecti-

on should escape their own Families, as if the rest of Mankind would not retalliate, and in return attack their Wives, Sisters, and Daughters in the same Manner. If Remonstrances of Duty and Obedience were proper Instruments of Reformation, I might (I believe) venture to affirm, there would not be a bad Wife in *England*; for as tame as we *Englishmen* are in Action, we are with regard to our Wives true Bullies, over valiant in Words; and many a Man who is intirely governed by his Wife in every particular Part of his Conduct, shall yet talk to her in such a Manner before Company, as would make any Stranger believe he were as absolute as the great Turk. I think my Lord *Townly* speaks pretty roundly to his; and Mr. *Cibber* tells us in his Preface, that Sir *John* designed his Actions should have answered that Behaviour: And indeed, when once a Man comes to threaten a Woman with turning her out of Doors, I think his Judgment should oblige him to be as good as his Word, for nothing but a Fault of a deeper Dye than Forgiveness can wash out, can excuse a Man for falling into such a Warmth of Temper; therefore



therefore I can't but think Sir *John's* Scheme ought to have by far the Preference: And Mr. *Cibber* seems himself to be of that Opinion, by his excusing in his Preface his varying from it, where he says, *He thought those Measures (how just soever they might be in real Life) were too severe for Comedy, and would want the proper Surprise, which is due to the End of a Play; therefore with much ado, and 'twas as much as I could do with Probability, I preserved the Lady's Chastity, that the Sense of her Errors might make a Reconciliation non impracticable, &c.* So far Mr. *Cibber's* own Words, but, with Submission, I cannot but think he judged a little wrong in this particular; for as to his first Objection, that such harsh Measures would be too severe for Comedy, &c. As it was, he carried the severe part so far, as with the Help of the Action to draw Tears from the Eyes of most of his Audience, which surely can never be the natural Business of Comedy; therefore since he had broke in upon Rules so far, he might (I should think) have safely ventured one Step farther; and if he had not  
made

made it regular, compensated for that Fault by making of it just; besides I don't know, but the Surprise of seeing a Woman treated as she deserved, might have been full as great, at least to the thinking part of the Audience, as seeing a Quarrel made up upon the Stage, which is on the same Occasion hourly practised in real Life. Again, I can't but wonder at the Difficulty Mr. *Cibber* found in preserving the Lady's Chastity, which he in the vehementest Manner avers, was as much as ever he could compass, when Mr. *Johnson*, in his *Masquerade*, had so many Years ago chalked out the Method to him. 'Tis true, his Lady was reclaimed in a very different Manner, but yet the Provocations she gave her Husband were equal, and therefore he lay under as great a Difficulty to bring a Reconciliation about; but in how handsome, how moving, how reasonable a way he did it, I leave every impartial Reader of his Play to judge. He makes his fine Gentleman preserve the utmost good Manners towards his Wife throughout every Scene, and is so far from attempting to starve her into a Reformation, that 'tis by the utmost Generosity he effects

fects it. It is true he talks of parting with her, but then she begins with him first; and beside, it very plainly appears all the time, that he only makes use of that Insinuation, as a Help to fix her the more firmly to him, and not as the Effects of a real Passion. Nor can we call his unbounded Love to such a worthless Woman so much in Question, when we come to find she had some Seeds of Virtue in her, which, however dead to Reproach, sprung up and quickened by Acts of Goodness and Generosity: She thought herself undone, irretrievably so, and that determined her to accept of his Offer, and go into the Countrey; but with what Regret appears in every Look and Word, 'till by his artful Management he convinced her it was not Caprice, it was not Humour, it was not a sordid Love of Money, that influenced him to desire it, but a tender Regard to their mutual Happiness and Honour. On the contrary, Lady Townly is intirely threatened into her Alteration of Behaviour. Mr. *Ombre* indeed just mentions how far a Husband's Power may extend, but adds, that he had ne'er a Thought  
of

of putting it in practice : Lord *Townly* plays the Master in its utmost Meaning ; had she compleated the fine Lady, and brought a Lover to his Bed, as well as kept him out of it, he could not possibly have treated her in a severer Manner ; and even in that Case, the Law would have obliged him to have supported her according to the Fortune he had with her, whereas he now denies her more than the bare Support of Life : Nor can any thing, but the Passion he is supposed to be in, excuse the Inconsistency in his Words, where one Moment he tells her, that in regard to her Father, he will continue to keep her as his Daughter ; and in almost the same Breath does as good as say, she must pin up her Petticoat and trudge, for that the Coach, which attends to carry her away, she must use no more. How consistent that is with the Education of a Nobleman's Daughter every body may judge ; and I dare say, all the Moral the Ladies, that is the fine Ladies, will draw from it is, the Necessity of a separate Provision. On the other-hand, Mr. *Ombre* tells his Lady upon the same Occasion, that he won't give her



her or himself the Pain of making Conditions ; but that his Lawyer shall settle that Matter with her Trustees: The Business of the Heart is all that he thinks worthy a Dispute in his own Person ; and indeed throughout treats her in that human, that polite Manner, which renders the *English* Ladies the Envy as well as Admiration of all other Nations ; I say Admiration, for Liberty is the Parent of Perfection, the Source of Knowledge : And as it is not in the Symmetry of the outward Form only that our Women excel, so I can't but believe their Exaltedness of Mind is in a great Measure owing to that Freedom of Manners they so peculiarly enjoy beyond every other Nation, that of *France* only excepted. When I commend this Beauty of Temper towards the Sex, I do not mean, that a Man, to stand possessed of it, should take whatever Usage a Woman pleases to impose ; so far from it, that I think that Man as great a Coward, who submits to have his Happiness and his Estate squandered by the Hands of a rash inconsiderate Woman, for Fear of a Separation, as he that suffers

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his

his Honour and Fortune to lie at the Mercy of a blustering Bully, because he dare not resent the Authority he assumes. But since we *Englishmen* do, and that most justly, value ourselves upon not abusing that Power we have gained over our Equals in the Creation by mere bodily Strength, we should in each Individual endeavour to support that Merit we profess; and whenever any Representation upon the Stage tends to either the Suppression of our Morals, our good Nature, or our good Manners towards them, in Vindication of all those boasted Qualities we are obliged to enter our Protest. The latter of those Perfections (as I take it) centers chiefly in Words, an intemperate Action comes more justly under the Denomination of an Indecency, but it is chiefly the Management of our Words that renders us well bred or otherwise. A Man may behave with very ill Manners towards his own Wife, and yet be what the World in general calls a Polite Man, and a perfect good Husband; and I believe the Want of good Manners on both Sides makes many Couples unhappy, who are not themselves  
 sensible

sensible of the Source of their Uneasiness. 'Tis I think the more peculiar Business of the Stage to explode those Faults, and recommend those Perfections which are necessary to the well-being of Mankind, and yet the Advancement or Redress of which comes not under the Jurisdiction of any Law. Sir *John Vanbrugh* has followed that Method, the surly, the neglectful, the drunken Husband he has severely lashed; and in this his last Piece, no doubt of it, designed giving the Ladies as little Quarter for those Vices, which Custom has a good-deal authorized, and which brings a Succession of Wretchednesses upon many of our noblest Families. 'Tis not alone the Inheritance of a Man's Birthright, and that of his Heart, as Mr. *Ombre* emphatically calls it, that a Lady squanders, when she gives into that fashionable Diversion of deep Gaming; that Stock of Health and Spirits, which ought to devolve upon succeeding Generations, and which a Woman has the chief Management of, she entirely exhausts; nay even the fine Understandings and sound Judgments that have rendered many a no-

ble Family, and for many Generations, more conspicuous than their Titles or the Herald's Office, have been quite cut off by the Introduction into it of a female Gamester. This Assertion will appear no great Absurdity, if we consider how great an Effect the Temper, the Diet, and every thing that relates to the Mother, has upon the Infant while she goes with it; and I very much question, whether bodily Diseases are more destructive to it than Distempers of the Mind: A Fright received by the Parent shall often destroy the Infant, and a sudden Transport of Joy shall sometimes have as ill an Effect; and I dare venture to affirm, that every Oath a Lady *Towndly* swallows, shall give the Child an Emotion not much to its Advantage. As to the Judgment, I may possibly carry it too far, in thinking the present Ideas of the Mother shall in a great Measure affect the future ones of the Child; but I must own, to me they appear to have a very great Influence; and that the famed *Lycurgus* was of my Side the Question plainly appears from the Caution he always obliged to be taken in his

Commonwealth,



Commonwealth, that the breeding Women should be kept in an Equality of Temper, which, I am sure, no Gamestrefs in the World can be; for put the best, and suppose them successful ones, the very Transports that they receive from the sudden Compliments of Fortune must keep their Bloods in a continual Ferment, very unequal to that Glow of Spirits, that lively Warmth that plays about the Heart, when raised by any laudable Diversiſion, such as the Conversation of a few chosen Friends, the Representation of a well wrought Scene, or the masterly Strokes of a finished Hand in any kind of Musick, and so, &c. And I cannot but say, I think both Mr. *Cibber's* Lord *Townly*, and Mr. *Johnson's* Mr. *Om-bre*, might have urged this Evil to their Ladies, as a more cogent one for the quitting their way of Life, or else their quitting them, than the keeping them awake an Hour or two later than they chuse. It is the most difficult Task in the World to find fault with a good Grace, let there be ever so much Justice on one's Side, especially when one's own Humour is concerned, for  
fear

fear that should appear to be our Dictator, which is too partial a one ever to gain Credit; and when a Man tells his Wife, he will not have her sit up all Night at Play, and adds no better Reason against it, than because he loves to go to Bed early, she will be very apt to think his Humour more than his Judgment concerned in the Request, and that granted, her own will be very apt to rise in Opposition to it. Mr. *Ombre* does not dwell near so much upon the Article of Hours as Lord *Townly*, and throughout seems to make Reason, without the least Mixture of Humour, direct his Behaviour: And since the Town is so much inclined at this Juncture to receive a Piece of that turn, it is Pity Mr. *Johnson* should not have his Quota of Applause compleated in his own Name, which I think he scarce had when his Play was acted: For tho' every Commendation bestowed on Mr. *Cibber* on this Occasion, is a side-long Compliment to him, as having intirely laid the Plan upon which he went, and which I cannot but believe he would have acknowledged, had the Obligation, at the Time he

wrote

wrote his Preface, occurred to his Memory; yet some particular Remembrance of his Performance would be no little Encouragement to a generous Mind, to do his utmost towards entertaining the Town anew, or at least laying a fresh Foundation for some more favoured Writer to build upon: And I cannot but think we owe him so much at least, as to call for the Revival of his Comedy, and give it the fair Play of standing a Comparison, which surely could be no Injury to either. But lest that should not be granted, I cannot finish these imperfect Reflections, without doing Mr. *Cibber* the Justice of saying, that in his Comedy the lower Humour, as he terms it, is most incomparably well done, tho' (as it is no new thing for People to be ignorant where their greatest Perfection lies) he in his Preface seems to make an Apology for it; and in one Thing all the World must allow he has far exceeded his Competitor, which is in his Compliments to Mrs. *Oldfield*; but as the one is only condescending to an Acknowledgment, the other writing a Panegyrick, the Disparity may the better be accounted

counted for. I have but one Thing more to add, which is, that I am neither personally acquainted with Mr. *Cibber*, nor do I know the other Author so much as by Sight; therefore what Justice I would do them both, has at least the Recommendation of Impartiality; if any more capable Pen takes the hint, the Intent of mine is intirely answered.

**FINIS.**

